

*New claims*

Claims in the Application

42. (New) A method for the dehydration of Type II collagen containing cartilage in its natural form, which comprises,
- (a) combining said cartilage with an antimicrobial agent and at least 15 % by weight of the cartilage of an ionizing salt,
  - (b) heating the resulting mixture in particulate form at a temperature below which denaturization of the Type II collagen occurs until the water content is reduced to below 15 % by weight of the cartilage, and
  - (c) recovering a product containing the collagen II-containing protein of the cartilage in its original form and having a salt content of at least 45 % by weight of the cartilage.
43. (New) The method of claim 42 wherein the ionizing salt is used in solid form.
44. (New) The method of claim 42 wherein the heating is conducted at a temperature below about 110° F.
45. (New) The method of claim 42 wherein the process is carried out in the presence of an oxygen containing antimicrobial agent and an ionizable consumable salt.
46. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein anti-microbial agent is a hypochlorite.
47. (New). The method of claim 42 wherein the salt is sodium or potassium chloride.
48. (New) The process of claim 42 in which the salt concentration in the dried product is from 45 to 60% of the cartilage.
49. (New) ~~The method of dehydrating chicken cartilage containing Type II collagen~~ in its natural form which comprises
- (a) comminuting said cartilage,

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(b) soaking the resulting product in an aqueous solution of an antimicrobial agent, and blending such with potassium or sodium chloride in a concentration of at least 15 % by weight of the comminuted product,

(c) dehydrating the resulting mixture in particulate form at temperatures below 110° F until the water content of the mixture is reduced to below 10%, and recovering a product containing the Type II collagen of the chicken cartilage in its natural form and having a salt content of 45 to 60 % by weight of the cartilage.

50. (New) The method of claim 49 wherein the antimicrobial agent is a hypochlorite.

51. (New) The process of claim 39 wherein the dehydration is carried out in the presence of hydroxy-propyl methyl cellulose or lecithin.